

Source: Sky Control, Aviation and Aerospace News, 16 Nov 07.

REX welcomes governments regional airline pilot initiative

Regional Express (Rex) today responded to the Deputy Prime Minister's policy announcement designed to help overcome the acute shortage of regional airline pilots by offering a reimbursement of 25% of the training cost provided the pilot stays at least two years with a regional airline. Rex Chief of Staff Jim Davis said that the move by the government to channel pilots into regional airlines and to encourage them to stay for a minimum period of time was welcomed by the airline.

"It is hoped that this scheme will encourage more people to take up a career as a professional pilot and not be discouraged by the huge cost of training involved. This can be as much as \$100,000 and is typically required to be paid up front.

"To overcome the high initial cost of training, Rex will continue with its cadet scheme through its newly formed training academy whereby 50% of the training cost will be given as a loan and, for half of the cadets, an additional scholarship will be awarded to cover between 50% and 100% of the remaining amount. As a result we have received almost 1,000 applications so far and we are in the process of final selection of our initial batch of cadets for the 10 December 2007 start date," Mr Davis said.

Rex is Australia's largest independent regional airline operating a fleet of 35 Saab 340 aircraft on 1,300 flights weekly to 25 destinations from Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane. The Rex Group of companies comprises of Regional Express, air freight and charter operator Pel – Air Aviation and Dubbo based regional airline, Air Link.